LITTLE BLUE BOOK NO. 641
Edited by E. Haldeman-Julius

The Philosophy of Immanuel Kant

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Will Durant, Ph.D.

Director, Labor Temple School, New York City
Late Instructor in Philosophy, Columbia University
Author of "Philosophy and the Social Problem,"
"A Guide to Plato," etc.

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THE PHILOSOPHY OF IMMANUEL KANT

IMMANUEL KANT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
I. Roads to Kant	7
1. From Voltaire to Kant	9
2. From Locke to Kant	12
3. From Rousseau to Kant	18
II. Kant Himself	23
III. The Critique of Pure Reason	31
1. Transcendental Esthetic	35
2. Transcendental Analytic	40
3. Transcendental Dialectic	43
IV. The Critique of Practical Reason	50
V. On Religion and Reason	56
VI. On Politics and Eternal Peace	62
VII. Criticism and Estimate	70
VIII. A Note on Hegel	81

THE PHILOSOPHY OF IMMANUEL KANT

I. ROADS TO KANT

Never has a system of thought so dominated an epoch as the philosophy of Immanuel Kant dominated the thought of the nineteenth century. After almost three-score years of quiet and secluded development, the uncanny Scot of Königsberg roused the world from its "dogmatic slumber," in 1781, with his famous *Critique of Pure Reason;* and from that year to our own the "critical philosophy" has ruled the speculative roost of Europe. The philosophy of Schopenhauer rose to brief power on the romantic wave that broke in 1848; the theory of evolution swept everything before it after 1859; and the exhilarating iconoclasm of Nietzsche won the center of the philosophic stage as the century came to a close. But these were secondary and surface developments; underneath them the strong and steady current of the Kantian movement flowed on, always wider and keeper; until today its essential theorems are the axioms of all mature philosophy. Nietzsche takes Kant for granted, and

passes on;[1] Schopenhauer calls the *Critique* "the most important work in German literature," and considers any man a child until he has understood Kant;[2] Spencer could not understand Kant, and for precisely that reason, perhaps, fell a little short of the fullest philosophic stature. To adapt Hegel's phrase about Spinoza: to be a philosopher, one must first have been a Kantian.

Therefore let us become Kantians at once. But it cannot be done at once, apparently; for in philosophy, as in politics, the longest distance between two points is a straight line. Kant is the last person in the world whom we should read on Kant. Our philosopher is like and unlike Jehovah; he speaks through clouds, but without the illumination of the lightning-flash. He disdains examples and the concrete; they would have made his book too long, he argued.[3] (So abbreviated, it contains some 800 pages, nevertheless.) Only professional philosophers were expected to read him; and these would not need illustrations. Yet when Kant

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[1] *The Will to Power*, vol. ii, part I.

[2] *The World as Will and Idea*, London, 1883; vol. ii, p. 30.

[3] *The Critique of Pure Reason*, London, 1881; vol. ii, p. xxvii. All subsequent references are to volume two.

gave the MS. of the *Critique* to his friend Herz, a man much versed in speculation, Herz returned it half read, saying he feared insanity if he went on with it. What shall we do with such a philosopher?

Let us approach him deviously and cautiously, beginning at a safe and respectful distance from him; let us start at various points on the circumference of the subject, and then grope our way towards that subtle center where the most difficult of all philosophies has its secret and its treasure.

1. FROM VOLTAIRE TO KANT

The road here is from theoretical reason without religious faith, to religious faith without theoretical reason. Voltaire means the Enlightenment, the Encyclopedia, the Age of Reason. The warm enthusiasm of Francis Bacon had inspired all Europe (except Rousseau) with unquestioning faith in the power of science and logic to solve at last all problems, and illustrate the "infinite perfectibility" of man. Condorcet, in prison, wrote his *Historical Tableau of the Progress of the Human Spirit* (1793), which spoke the sublime faith of the eighteenth century in knowledge and reason, and asked no other key to Utopia than uni-

versal education. Even the steady Germans had their *Aufklärung*, their rationalist, Christian Wolff, and their hopeful Lessing. And the excitable Parisians of the Revolution dramatized this apotheosis of the intellect by worshipping the "Goddess of Reason,"—impersonated by a charming grisette.

In Spinoza this faith in reason had begotten a magnificent structure of geometry and logic: the universe was a mathematical system, and could be described *a priori*, by pure deduction from accepted axioms. In Hobbes the rationalism of Bacon had become an uncompromising atheism and materialism; again nothing was to exist but "atoms and the void." From Spinoza to Diderot the wrecks of faith lay in the wake of advancing reason: one by one the old dogmas disappeared; the Gothic cathedral of medieval belief, with its delightful details and grotesques, collapsed; the ancient God fell from his throne along with the bourbons, heaven faded into mere sky, and hell became only an emotional expression. Helvetius and Holbach made atheism so fashionable in the salons of France that even the clergy took it up; and La Mettrie went to peddle it in Germany, under the auspices of Prussia's king. When, in 1784, Lessing shocked

Jacobi by announcing himself a follower of Spinoza, it was a sign that faith had reached its nadir, and that Reason was triumphant.

David Hume, who played so vigorous a role in the Enlightenment assault on supernatural belief, said that when reason is against a man, he will soon turn against reason. Religious faith and hope, voiced in a hundred thousand steeples rising out of the soil of Europe everywhere, were too deeply rooted in the institutions of society and in the heart of man, to permit their ready surrender to the hostile verdict of reason; it was inevitable that this faith and this hope, so condemned, would question the competence of this judge, and would call for an examination of reason as well as of religion. What was this intellect that proposed to destroy with a syllogism the beliefs of thousands of years and billions of men? Was it infallible? Or was it one human organ like any other, with strictest limits to its functions and its powers? The time had come to judge this judge, to examine this ruthless Revolutionary Tribunal that was dealing out death so lavishly to every ancient hope. The time had come for a critique of reason.

2. FROM LOCKE TO KANT

The way had been prepared for such an examination by the work of Locke, Berkeley and Hume; and yet, apparently, their results too were hostile to religion.

John Locke (1632-1704) had proposed to apply to psychology the inductive tests and methods of Francis Bacon; in his great *Essay on Human Understanding* (1689) reason, for the first time in modern thought, had turned in upon itself, and philosophy had begun to scrutinize the instrument which it so long had trusted. This introspective movement in philosophy grew step by step with the introspective novel as developed by Richardson and Rousseau; just as the sentimental and emotional color of *Clarissa Harlowe* and *La Nouvelle Héloise* had its counterpart in the philosophic exaltation of instinct and feeling above intellect and reason.

How does knowledge arise? Have we, as some good people suppose, innate ideas, as, for example, of right and wrong, and God,—ideas inherent in the mind from birth, prior to all experience? Anxious theologians, worried lest belief in the Deity should disappear because God had not yet appeared in any telescope, had thought that faith and morals might be

strengthened if their central and basic ideas were shown to be inborn in every normal soul. But Locke, good Christian though he was, ready to argue most eloquently for "The Reasonableness of Christianity," could not accept these suppositions; he announced, quietly, that all our knowledge comes from experience and through our senses—that "there is nothing in the mind except what was first in the senses." The mind is at birth a clean sheet, a *tabula rasa;* and sense-experience writes upon it in a thousand ways, until sensation begets memory and memory begets ideas. All of which seemed to lead to the startling conclusion that since only material things can affect our sense, we know nothing but matter, and must accept a materialistic philosophy. If sensations are the stuff of thought, the hasty argued, matter must be the material of mind.

Not at all, said Bishop George Berkeley (1684-1753); this Lockian analysis of knowledge proves rather that matter does not exist except as a form of mind. It was a brilliant idea—to refute materialism by the simple expedient of showing that we know of no such thing as matter; in all Europe only a Gaelic imagination could have conceived this metaphysical magic.

But see how obvious it is, said the Bishop: has not Locke told us that all our knowledge is derived from sensation? Therefore all our knowledge of anything is merely our sensations of it, and the ideas derived from these sensations. A "thing" is merely a bundle of perceptions—i.e., classified and interpreted sensations. You protest that your breakfast is much more substantial than a bundle of perceptions; and that a hammer that teaches you carpentry through your thumb has a most magnificent materiality. But your breakfast is at first nothing but a congeries of sensations of sight and smell and touch; and then of taste; and then of internal comfort and warmth. Likewise, the hammer is a bundle of sensations of color, size, shape, weight, touch, etc.; its reality for you is not in its materiality, but in the sensations that come from your thumb. If you had no senses, the hammer would not exist for you at all; it might strike your dead thumb forever and yet win from you not the slightest attention. It is only a bundle of sensations, or a bundle of memories; it is a condition of the mind. All matter, so far as we know it, is a mental condition; and the only reality that we know directly is mind. So much for materialism.

But the Irish Bishop had reckoned without the Scotch sceptic, David Hume (1711-1776), who at the age of twenty-six shocked all Christendom with his highly heretical *Treatise on Human Nature*,—one of the classics and marvels of modern philosophy. We know the mind, said Hume, only as we know matter: by perception, though it be in this case internal. Never do we perceive any such entity as the "mind;" we perceive merely separate ideas, memories, feelings, etc. The mind is not a substance, an organ that has ideas; it is only an abstract name for the series of ideas; the perceptions, memories and feelings *are* the mind. There is no observable "soul" behind the processes of thought. The result appeared to be that Hume had as effectually destroyed mind as Berkeley had destroyed matter. Nothing was left; and philosophy found itself in the midst of ruins of its own making. No wonder that a wit advised the abandonment of the controversy, saying: "No matter, never mind."

But Hume was not content to destroy orthodox religion by dissipating the concept of soul; he proposed also to destroy science by dissolving the concept of law. Science and philosophy alike, since Bruno and Galileo, had

been making much of natural law, of "necessity" in the sequence of effect upon cause; Spinoza had reared his majestic metaphysics upon this proud conception. But observe, said Hume, that we never perceive causes, or laws; we perceive events and sequences, and *infer* causation and necessity; a law is not an eternal and necessary decree to which events are subjected, but merely a mental summary and shorthand of our kaleidoscopic experience; we have no guarantee that the sequences hitherto observed will re-appear unaltered in future experience. "Law" is an observed *custom* in the sequence of events; but there is no "necessity" in custom. Only mathematical formulae have necessity—they alone are inherently and unchangeably true; and this merely because such formulae are tautological—the predicate is already contained in the subject; "3×3=9" is an eternal and necessary truth only because "3×3" and "9" are one and the same thing differently expressed; the predicate adds nothing to the subject. Science, then, must limit itself strictly to mathematics and direct experiment; it cannot trust to unverified deduction from "laws." "When we run through libraries, persuaded of these principles," writes our uncanny

sceptic, "what havoc must we make! If we take in our hands any volume of school metaphysics, for instance, let us ask, 'Does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number?' No. 'Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence?' No. Commit it then to the flames, for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion."[4]

Imagine how the ears of the orthodox tingled at these words. Here the epistemological tradition—the inquiry into the nature, sources, and validity of knowledge—had ceased to be a support to religion; the sword with which Bishop Berkeley had slain the dragon of materialism had turned against the immaterial mind and the immortal soul; and in the turmoil science itself had suffered severe injury. No wonder that when Immanuel Kant, in 1755, read a German translation of the works of David Hume, he was shocked by these results, and was roused, as he said, from the "dogmatic slumber" in which he had assumed without question the essentials of religion and the bases of science. Were both science and faith

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[4]Quoted in Royce, *The Spirit of Modern Philosophy*, Boston, 1892; p. 98.

to be surrendered to the sceptic? What could be done to save them?

3. FROM ROUSSEAU TO KANT

To the argument of the Enlightenment, that reason makes for materialism, Berkeley had essayed the answer that matter does not exist. But this had led, in Hume, to the retort that by the same token mind does not exist either. Another answer was possible—that reason is no final test. There are some theoretical conclusions against which our whole being rebels; we have no right to presume that these demands of our nature must be stifled at the dictates of a logic which is after all but the recent construction of a frail and deceptive part of us. How often our instincts and feelings push aside the little syllogisms which would like us to behave like geometrical figures, and make love with mathematical precision! Sometimes, no doubt,—and particularly in the novel complexities and artificialities of urban life,—reason is the better guide; but in the great crises of life, and in the great problems of conduct and belief, we trust to our feelings rather than to our diagrams. If reason is against religion, so much the worse for reason!

Such, in effect, was the argument of Jean

Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), who almost alone, in France, fought the materialism and atheism of the Enlightenment. What a fate for a delicate and neurotic nature, to have been cast amidst the robust rationalism and the almost brutal hedonism[5] of the Encyclopedists! Rousseau had been a sickly youth, driven into brooding and introversion by his physical weakness and the unsympathetic attitude of his parents and teachers; he had escaped from the stings of reality into a hot-house world of dreams, where the victories denied him in life and love could be had for the imagining. His *Confessions* reveal an unreconciled complex of the most refined sentimentality with an obtuse sense of decency and honor; and through it all an unsullied conviction of his moral superiority.[6]

In 1749 the Aademy of Dijon offered a prize for an essay on the question, "Has the Progress of the Sciences and the Arts Contributed to Corrupt, or to Purify, Morals?" Rousseau's essay won the prize. Culture is much more of an evil than a good, he argued, with all the intensity and sincerity of one who, finding cul-

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[5]The doctrine that all behavior is motived by the pursuit of pleasure.

[6]Cf. *Confessions,* bk. X; vol. ii, p. 184.

ture out of his reach, proposed to prove it worthless. Consider the frightful disorders which printing has produced in Europe. Wherever philosophy arises, the moral health of the nation decays. "It was even a saying among the philosophers themselves that since learned men had appeared, honest men were nowhere to be found." "I venture to declare that a state of reflection is contrary to nature; and that a thinking man" (an "intellectual," as we would now say) "is a depraved animal." It would be better to abandon our over-rapid development of the intellect, and to aim rather at training the heart and the affections. Education does not make a man good, it only makes him clever—usually for mischief. Instinct and feeling are more trustworthy than reason.

In his famous novel, *La Nouvelle Héloise* (1761), Rousseau illustrated at great length the superiority of feeling to intellect; sentimentality became the fashion among the ladies of the aristocracy, and among some of the men; France was for a century watered with literary, and then with actual, tears; and the great movement of the European intellect in the eighteenth century gave way to the romantic emotional literature of 1789-1848. The cur-

rent carried with it a strong revival of religious feeling; the ecstasies of Chateaubriand's *Génie du Christianisme* (1802) were merely an echo of the "Confessions of Faith of the Savoyard Vicar" which Rousseau included in his epochal essay on education—*Emile* (1762). The argument of the "Confession" was briefly this: that though reason might be against belief in God and immortality, feeling was overwhelmingly in their favor; why should we not trust in instinct here, rather than yield to the despair of an avid scepticism?

When Kant read *Emile* he omitted his daily walk under the linden trees, in order to finish the book at once. It was an event in his life to find here another man who was groping his way out of the darkness of atheism, and who boldly affirmed the priority of feeling over theoretical reason in these supra-sensual concerns. Here at last was the second half of the answer to irreligion; now finally all the scoffers and doubters would be scattered. To put these threads of argument together, to unite the ideas of Berkeley and Hume with the feelings of Rousseau, to save religion from reason,

and yet at the same time to save science from scepticism—this was the mission of Immanuel Kant.

But who was Immanuel Kant?

II. KANT HIMSELF

Kant was born at Königsberg, Prussia, in 1724. Except for a short period of tutoring in a nearby village, this quiet little professor, who loved so much to lecture on the geography and ethnology of distant lands, never left his native city. He came of a poor family, which had left Scotland some hundred years before Immanuel's birth. His mother was a Pietist,—i.e., a member of a religious sect which, like the Methodists of England, insisted on the full strictness and rigor of religious practice and belief. Our philosopher was so immersed in religion from morning to night that on the one hand he experienced a reaction which led him to stay away from church all through his adult life; and on the other hand he kept to the end the sombre stamp of the German Puritan, and felt, as he grew old, a great longing to preserve for himself and the world the essentials, at least, of the faith so deeply inculcated in him by his mother.

But a young man growing up in the age of Frederick and Voltaire could not insulate himself from the sceptical current of the time.

Kant was profoundly influenced even by the men whom later he aimed to refute, and perhaps most of all by his favorite enemy, Hume; we shall see later the remarkable phenomenon of a philosopher transcending the conservatism of his maturity and returning in almost his last work, and at almost the age of seventy, to a virile liberalism that would have brought him martydrom had not his age and his fame protected him. Even in the midst of his work of religious restoration we hear, with surprising frequency, the tones of another Kant whom we might almost mistake for a Voltaire. Schopenhauer thought it "not the least merit of Frederick the Great, that under his government Kant could develop himself, and dared to publish his *Critique of Pure Reason.* Hardly under any other government would a salaried professor" (therefore, in Germany, a government employee) "have ventured such a thing. Kant was obliged to promise the immediate successor of the great King that he would write no more."[7] It was in appreciation of this freedom that Kant dedicated the *Critique* to Zedlitz, Frederick's far-sighted and progressive Minister of Education.

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[7] *The World as Will and Idea,* London, 1883; vol. ii, p. 133.

In 1755 Kant began his work as private lecturer at the University of Königsberg. For fifteen years he was left in this lowly post; twice his applications for a professorship were refused. At last, in 1770, he was made professor of logic and metaphysics. After many years of experience as a teacher, he wrote a text-book of pedagogy, of which he used to say that it contained many excellent precepts, none of which he had ever applied. Yet he was perhaps a better teacher than writer; and two generations of students learned to love him. One of his practical principles was to attend most to those pupils who were of middle ability; the dunces, he said, were beyond all help, and the geniuses would help themselves.

Nobody expected him to startle the world with a new metaphysical system; to startle anybody seemed the very last crime that this timid and modest professor would commit. He himself had no expectations in that line; at the age of forty-two he wrote: "I have the fortune to be a lover of metaphysics; but my mistress has shown me few favors as yet."[8] He spoke in those days of the "bottomless abyss of

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[8]Quoted by Royce, *The Spirit of Modern Philosophy;* Boston, 1892; p. 120.

metaphysics," and of metaphysics as "a dark ocean without shores or lighthouse," strewn with many a philosophic wreck.[9] He could even attack the metaphysicians as those who dwelt on the high towers of speculation, "where there is usually a great deal of wind."[10] He did not foresee that the greatest of all metaphysical tempests was to be of his own blowing.

During these quiet years his interests were rather physical than metaphysical. He wrote on planets, earthquakes, fire, winds, ether, volcanoes, geography, ethnology, and a hundred other things of that sort, not usually confounded with metaphysics. His *Theory of the Heavens* (1755) proposed something very similar to the nebular hypothesis of Laplace, and attempted a mechanical explanation of all sidereal motion and development. All the planets, Kant thought, have been or will be inhabited; and those that are farthest from the sun, having had the longest period of growth, have probably a higher species of intelligent organisms than any yet produced on our planet. His *Anthropology* (put together in 1798 from the lectures of a life-time) suggested the possibility of the

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[9]Quoted by Paulsen, *Immanuel Kant;* New York, 1910; p. 82.

[10]*Ibid.*, p. 56.

animal origin of man. Kant argued that if the human infant, in early ages when man was still largely at the mercy of wild animals, had cried as loudly upon entering the world as it does now, it would have been found out and devoured by beasts of prey; that in all probability, therefore, man was very different at first from what he had become under civilization. And then Kant went on, subtly: "How nature brought about such a development, and by what causes it was aided, we know not. This remark carries us a long way. It suggests the thought whether the present period of history, on the occasion of some great physical revolution, may not be followed by a third, when an orang-outang or a chimpanzee would develop the organs which serve for walking, touching, speaking, into the articulated structure of a human being, with a central organ for the use of understanding, and gradually advance under the training of social institutions." Was this use of the future tense Kant's cautiously indirect way of putting forth his view of how man had really developed from the beast?[11]

So we see the slow growth of this simple

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[11]So Wallace suggests: *Kant,* Philadelphia, 1882; p. 115.

little man, hardly five feet tall, modest, shrinking, and yet containing in his head, or generating there, the most far-reaching revolution in modern philosophy. Kant's life, says one biographer, passed like the most regular of regular verbs. "Rising, coffee-drinking, writing, lecturing, dining, walking," says Heine,—"each had its set time. And when Immanuel Kant, in his grey coat, cane in hand, appeared at the door of his house, and strolled towards the small avenue of linden trees which is still called 'The Philosopher's Walk,' the neighbors knew it was exactly half-past-three by the clock. So he promenaded up and down, during all seasons; and when the weather was gloomy, or the grey clouds threatened rain, his old servant Lampe was seen plodding anxiously after, with a large umbrella under his arm, like a symbol of Prudence."

He was so frail in physique that he had to take severe measures to regimen himself; he thought it safer to do this without a doctor; and so he lived to the age of eighty. At seventy he wrote an essay "On the Power of the Mind to Master the Feeling of Illness by Force of Resolution." One of his favorite principles was to breathe only through the nose, especially

when out-doors; hence, in autumn, winter and spring, he would permit no one to talk to him on his daily walks; better silence than a cold. He applied philosophy even to holding up his stockings—by bands passing up into his trousers' pockets, where they ended in springs contained in small boxes.[12] He thought everything out carefully before acting; and therefore remained a bachelor all his life long. Twice he thought of offering his hand to a lady; but he reflected so long that in one case the lady married a bolder man, and in the other the lady removed from Königsberg before the philosopher could make up his mind. Perhaps he felt, like Nietzsche, that marriage would hamper him in the honest pursuit of truth; "a married man," Talleyrand used to say, "will do anything for money." And Kant had written, at twenty-two, with all the fine enthusiasm of omnipotent youth: "I have already fixed upon the line which I am resolved to keep. I will enter on my course, and nothing shall prevent me from pursuing it."[13]

And so he persevered, through poverty and obscurity, sketching and writing and rewriting

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[12]Introd. to Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason;* London, 1909; p. xlii.

[13]Wallace, p. 100.

his *magnum opus* for almost fifteen years; finishing it only in 1781, when he was fifty-seven years old. Never did a man mature so slowly; and then again, never did a book so startle and upset the philosophic world.

III. THE CRITIQUE OF PURE REASON[14]

What is meant by this title? *Critique* is not precisely a criticism, but a critical analysis; Kant is not attacking "pure reason," except, at the end, to show its limitations; rather he hopes to show its possibility, and to exalt it above the impure knowledge which comes to us through the distorting channels of sense. For "pure" reason is to mean knowledge that does not come through our senses, but is independent of all sense experience; knowledge belonging to us by the inherent nature and structure of the mind.

At the very outset, then, Kant flings down a challenge to Locke and the English school: knowledge is not all derived from the senses. Hume thought he had shown that there is no soul, and no science; that our minds are but

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[14]A word about what to read. Kant himself is hardly intelligible to the beginner, because his thought is insulated with a bizarre and intricate terminology (hence the paucity of direct quotations in this essay). Perhaps the simplest introduction is Wallace's *Kant*, in the Blackwood Philosophical Classics. Heavier and more advanced is Paulsen's *Immanuel Kant*. Chamberlain's *Immanuel Kant* (2 vols.; New York, 1914) is interesting but erratic and digressive. A good criticism of Kant may be found in Schopenhauer's *World as Will and Idea;* vol. ii. pp. 1-159.

our ideas in procession and association; and our certainties but probabilities in perpetual danger of violation. These false conclusions, says Kant, are the result of false premises: you assume that all knowledge comes from "separate and distinct" sensations; naturally these cannot give you necessity, or invariable sequences of which you may be forever certain; and naturally you must not expect to "see" your soul, even with the eyes of the internal sense. Let us grant that absolute certainty of knowledge is impossible if all knowledge comes from sensation, from an independent external world which owes us no promise of regularity of behavior. But what if we have knowledge that is independent of sense-experience, knowledge whose truth is certain to us even before experience—*a priori?* Then absolute truth, and absolute science, would become possible, would it not? Is there such absolute knowledge? This is the problem of the first *Critique.* "My question is, what we can hope to achieve with reason, when all the material and assistance of experience are taken away."[15] The *Critique* becomes a detailed biology of thought, an examination of the origin and evolution of con-

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[15] *Critique of Pure Reason,* pref. p. xxiv.

cepts, an analysis of the inherited structure of the mind. This, as Kant believes, is the entire problem of metaphysics. "In this book I have chiefly aimed at completeness; and I venture to maintain that there ought not to be one single metaphysical problem that has not been solved here, or to the solution of which the key at least has not here been supplied."[16] *Exegi monumentum aere perennius!* With such egotism nature spurs us on to creation.

The *Critique* comes to the point at once. "Experience is by no means the only field to which our understanding can be confined. Experience tells us what is, but not that it must be necessarily what it is and not otherwise. It therefore never gives us any really general truths; and our reason, which is particularly anxious for that class of knowledge, is roused by it rather than satisfied. General truths, which at the same time bear the character of an inward necessity, must be independent of experience,—clear and certain in themselves."[17] That is to say, they must be true no matter what our later experience may be; true even *before* experience; true *a priori*. "How far we can advance independently of all experience, in *a priori* knowl-

[16] *Ibid.*, p. xxiii. [17] *Ibid.*, p. 1

edge, is shown by the brilliant example of mathematics."[18] Mathematical knowledge is necessary and certain; we cannot conceive of future experience violating it. We may believe that the sun will "rise" in the west to-morrow, or that some day, in some conceivable asbestos world, fire will not burn stick; but we cannot for the life of us believe that two times two will ever make anything else than four. Such truths are true before experience; they do not depend on experience past, present, or to come. Therefore they are absolute and necessary truths; it is inconceivable that they should ever become untrue. But whence do we get this character of absoluteness and necessity? Not from experience; for experience gives us nothing but separate sensations and events, which may alter their sequence in the future.[19] These truths derive their necessary character from the inherent structure of our minds, from the natural and inevitable manner in which our minds must operate. For the mind of man (and here at last is the great thesis of Kant)

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[18] P. 4.

[19] "Radical empiricism" (James, Dewey, etc.) enters the controversy at this point, and argues against both Hume and Kant, that experience gives us relations and sequences as well as sensations and events.

is not passive wax upon which experience and sensation write their absolute and yet whimsical will; nor is it a mere abstract name for the series or group of mental states; it is an active organ which moulds and co-ordinates sensations into ideas, an organ which transforms the chaotic multiplicity of experience into the ordered unity of thought.

But how?

1. TRANSCENDENTAL ESTHETIC

The effort to answer this question, to study the inherent structure of the mind, or the innate laws of thought, is what Kant calls "transcendental philosophy," because it is a problem transcending sense-experience. "I call knowledge transcendental which is occupied not so much with objects, as with our *a priori* concepts of objects,"[20]—with our modes of correlating our experience into knowledge. There are two grades or stages in this process of working up the raw material of sensation into the finished product of thought. The first stage is the co-ordination of sensations by applying to them the forms of perception—space and time; the second stage is the co-ordination of the perceptions so developed, by applying

[20] *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 10.

to them the forms of conception—the "categories" of thought. Kant, using the word *esthetic* in its original and etymological sense, as connoting sensation or feeling, calls the study of the first of these stages "Transcendental Esthetic;" and using the word *logic* as meaning the science of the forms of thought, he calls the study of the second stage "Transcendental Logic." These are terrible words, which will take meaning as the argument proceeds; once over this hill, the road to Kant will be comparatively clear.

Now just what is meant by sensations and perceptions?—and how does the mind change the former into the latter? By itself a sensation is merely the awareness of a stimulus; we have a taste on the tongue, an odor in the nostrils, a sound in the ears, a temperature on the skin, a flash of light on the retina, a pressure on the fingers: it is the raw crude beginning of experience; it is what the infant has in the early days of its groping mental life; it is not yet knowledge. But let these various sensations group themselves about an object in space and time—say this apple; let the odor in the nostrils, and the taste on the tongue, the light on the retina, the shape-

revealing pressure on the fingers and the hand, unite and group themselves about this "thing": and there is now an awareness not so much of a stimulus as of a specific object; there is a perception. Sensation has passed into knowledge.

But again, was this passage, this grouping, automatic? Did the sensations of themselves, spontaneously and naturally, fall into a cluster and an order, and so become perception? Yes, said Locke and Hume; not at all, says Kant.

For these varied sensations come to us through varied channels of sense, through a thousand "afferent nerves" that pass from skin and eye and ear and tongue into the brain; what a medley of messengers they must be as they crowd into the chambers of the mind, calling for attention! No wonder Plato spoke of "the rabble of the senses." And left to themselves, they remain rabble, a chaotic "manifold," pitifully impotent, waiting to be ordered into meaning and purpose and power. As readily might the messages brought to a general from a thousand sectors of the battle-line weave themselves unaided into comprehension and command. No; there is a law-giver for this mob, a directing and co-ordinating power that

does not merely receive, but takes these atoms of sensation and moulds them into sense.

Observe, first, that not all of the messages are accepted. A myriad forces play upon your body at this moment; a storm of stimuli beats down upon the nerve-endings which, amoeba-like, you put forth to experience the external world: but not all that call are chosen; only those sensations are selected that can be moulded into perceptions suited to your present purpose, or that bring those imperious messages of danger which are always relevant. The clock is ticking, and you do not hear it; but that same ticking, not louder than before, will be heard at once if your purpose wills it so. The mother asleep at her infant's cradle is deaf to the turmoil of life about her; but let the little one move, and the mother gropes her way back to waking attention like a diver rising hurriedly to the surface of the sea. Let the purpose be addition, and the stimulus "two and three" brings the response, "five;" let the purpose be multiplication, and the same stimulus, the same auditory sensations, "two and three," bring the response, "six." Association of sensations or ideas is not merely by contiguity in space or time, nor by similarity, nor

by recency, frequency or intensity of experience; it is above all determined by the purpose of the mind. Sensations and thoughts are servants, they await our call, they do not come unless we need them. There is an agent of selection and direction that uses them and is their master. In addition to the sensations and the ideas there is the *mind*.

This agent of selection and co-ordination, Kant thinks, uses first of all two simple methods for the classification of the material presented to it: the sense of space, and the sense of time. As the general arranges the messages brought him according to the place from which they come, and the time at which they were written, and so finds an order and a system for them all; so the mind allocates its sensations in space and time, attributes them to this object here or that object there, to this present time or to that past. Space and time are not things perceived, but modes of perception, ways of putting sense into sensation; space and time are organs of perception.

They are *a priori*, because all ordered experience involves and presupposes them. Without them, sensations could never grow into perceptions. They are *a priori* because it is incon-

ceivable that we should ever have any future experience that will not also involve them. And because they are *a priori*, their laws, which are the laws of mathematics, are *a priori*, absolute and necessary, world without end. It is not merely probable, it is certain that we shall never find a straight line that is not the shortest distance between two points. Mathematics, at least, is saved from the dissolvent scepticism of David Hume.

Can all the sciences be similarly saved? Yes, if their basic principle, the law of causality—that a given cause must *always* be followed by a given effect—can be shown, like space and time, to be so inherent in all the processes of understanding that no future experience can be conceived that would violate or escape it. Is causality, too, *a priori*, an indispensable prerequisite and condition of all thought?

2. TRANSCENDENTAL ANALYTIC

So we pass from the wide field of sensation and perception to the dark and narrow chamber of thought; from "transcendental esthetic" to "transcendental logic;" and first to the naming and analysis of those elements in our thought which are not so much given to the mind by perception as given to perception by

the mind; those levers which raise the "perceptual" knowledge of objects into the "conceptual" knowledge of relationships, sequences, and laws; those tools of the mind which refine experience into science. Just as perceptions arranged sensations around objects in space and time, so conception arranges perceptions (objects and events) about the ideas of cause, unity, reciprocal relation, necessity, contingency, etc.; these and other "categories" are the structure into which perceptions are received, and by which they are classified and moulded into the ordered concepts of thoughts. These are the very essence and character of the mind; mind *is* the co-ordination of experience.

And here again observe the activity of this mind that was, to Locke and Hume, mere "passive wax" under the blows of sense-experience. Consider a system of thought like Aristotle's; is it conceivable that this almost cosmic ordering of data should have come by the automatic, anarchistic spontaneity of the data themselves? See this magnificent card-catalogue in the library, intelligently ordered into sequence by human purpose. Then picture all these card-cases thrown upon the floor, all these cards scattered pell-mell into riotous disorder. Can

you now conceive these scattered cards pulling themselves up, Münchausen-like, from their disarray, passing quietly into their alphabetical and topical places in their proper boxes, and each box into its fit place in the rack,—until all should be order and sense and purpose again? What a miracle-story these sceptics have given us after all!

Sensation is unorganized stimulus, perception is organized sensation, conception is organized perception, science is organized knowledge, wisdom is organized life: each is a greater degree of order, and sequence, and unity. Whence this order, this sequence, this unity? Not from the things themselves; for they are known to us only by sensations that come through a thousand channels at once in disorderly multitude; it is our purpose that put order and sequence and unity upon this importunate lawlessness; it is ourselves, our personalities, our minds, that bring light upon these seas. Locke was wrong when he said, "There is nothing in the intellect except what was first in the senses;" Leibniz was right when he added,—"nothing, except the intellect itself." "Perceptions without conceptions," says Kant, "are blind." If perceptions wove themselves auto-

matically into ordered thought, if mind were not an active effort hammering out order from chaos, how could the same experience leave one man mediocre, and in a more active and tireless soul be raised to the light of wisdom and the beautiful logic of truth?

The world, then, has order, not of itself, but because the thought that knows the world is itself an ordering, the first stage in that classification of experience which at last is science and philosophy. The laws of thought are also the laws of things, for things are known to us only through this thought that must obey these laws, since it and they are one; in effect, as Hegel was to say, the laws of logic and the laws of nature are one, and logic and metaphysics merge. The generalized principles of science are necessary because they are ultimately laws of thought that are involved and presupposed in every experience, past, present, and to come. Science is absolute, and truth is everlasting.

3. TRANSCENDENTAL DIALECTIC

Nevertheless, this certainty, this absoluteness, of the highest generalizations of logic and science, are, paradoxically, limited and relative: limited strictly to the field of actual experience,

and relative strictly to our human mode of experience. For if our analysis has been correct, the world as we know it is a construction, a finished product, almost—one might say—a manufactured article, to which the mind contributes as much by its moulding forms as the thing contributes by its stimuli. (So we perceive the top of the table as round, whereas our sensation is of an ellipse.) The object as it appears to us is a phenomenon, an appearance, perhaps very different from the external object before it came within the ken of our senses; what that original object was we can never know; the "thing-in-itself" may be an object of thought or inference (a "noumenon"), but it cannot be experienced,— for in being experienced it would be changed by its passage through sense and thought. "It remains completely unknown to us what objects may be by themselves and apart from the receptivity of our senses. We know nothing but our manner of perceiving them; that manner being peculiar to us, and not necessarily shared by every being, though, no doubt, by every human being."[21] The moon as known to us is merely

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[21] *Critique*, p. 37. If Kant had not added the last clause, his argument for the necessity of knowledge would have fallen.

a bundle of sensations (as Hume saw), unified (as Hume did not see) by our native mental structure through the elaboration of sensations into perceptions, and of these into conceptions or ideas; in result, the moon is *for us* merely our ideas.[22] Not that Kant ever doubts the existence of "matter" and the external world; but he adds that we know nothing certain about them except that they exist. Our detailed knowledge is about their appearance, their phenomena, about the sensations which we have of them. Idealism does not mean, as the man in the street thinks, that nothing exists outside the perceiving subject; but that a goodly part of every object is created by the forms of perception and understanding: we know the object as transformed into idea; what it is before being so transformed we cannot know. Science, after all, is naive; it supposes that it is dealing with things in themselves, in their full-blooded external and uncorrupted reality; philosophy is a little more sophisticated, and realizes that the whole material of science consists of sensations, perceptions and conceptions, rather than of things. "Kant's

[22] So John Stuart Mill, with all his English tendency to realism, was driven at last to define matter as merely "a permanent possibility of sensations."

greatest merit," says Schopenhauer, "is the distinction of the phenomenon from the thing-it-itself."[23]

It follows that any attempt, by either science or religion, to say just what the ultimate reality is, must fall back into mere hypothesis; "the understanding can never go beyond the limits of sensibility."[24] Such transcendental science loses itself in "antinomies," and such transcendental theology loses itself in "paralogisms." It is the cruel function of "transcendental dialectic" to examine the validity of these attempts of reason to escape from the enclosing circle of sensation and appearance into the unknowable world of things "in themselves."

Antinomies are the insoluble dilemmas born of a science that tries to overleap experience. So, for example, when knowledge attempts to decide whether the world is finite or infinite in space, thought rebels against either supposition: beyond any limit, we are driven to conceive something further, endlessly; and yet infinity is itself inconceivable. Again: did the world have a beginning in time? We cannot conceive eternity; but then, too, we cannot conceive any point in the past without feeling

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[23] *The World as Will and Idea;* vol. ii, p. 7.
[24] *Critique,* p. 215.

at once that before that, something was. Or has that chain of causes which science studies, a beginning, a First Cause? Yes, for an endless chain is inconceivable; no, for a first cause uncaused is inconceivable as well. Is there any exit from these blind alleys of thought? There is, says Kant, if we remember that space, time and cause are modes of perception and conception, which must enter into all our experience, since they are the web and structure of experience; these dilemmas arise from supposing that space, time and cause are external things independent of perception. We shall never have any experience which we shall not interpret in terms of space and time and cause; but we shall never have any philosophy if we forget that these are not things, but modes of interpretation and understanding.

So with the paralogisms of "rational" theology—which attempts to prove by theoretical reason that the soul is an incorruptible substance, that the will is free and above the law of cause and effect, and that there exists a "necessary being," God, as the presupposition of all reality. Transcendental dialectic must remind theology that substance and cause and necessity are finite categories, modes of arrangement and classification which the mind

applies to sense-experience, and reliably valid only for the phenomena that appear to such experience; we cannot apply these conceptions to the noumenal (or merely inferred and conjectural) world. Religion cannot be proved by theoretical reason.

So the first *Critique* ends. One could well imagine David Hume, uncannier Scot than Kant himself, viewing the results with a sardonic smile. Here was a tremendous book, eight hundred pages long; weighted beyond bearing, almost, with ponderous terminology; proposing to solve all the problems of metaphysics, and incidentally to save the absoluteness of science and the essential truth of religion. What had the book really done? It had destroyed the naive world of science, and limited it, if not in degree, certainly in scope,—and to a world confessedly of mere surface and appearance, beyond which it could issue only in farcical "antinomies"; so science was "saved"! The most eloquent and incisive portions of the book had argued that the objects of faith—a free and immortal soul, a benevolent creator—could never be proved by reason: so religion was "saved"! No wonder the priests of Germany protested madly against

this salvation, and revenged themselves by calling their dogs Immanuel Kant![25]

And no wonder that Heine compared the little professor of Königsberg with the terrible Robespierre; the latter had merely killed a king, and a few thousand Frenchmen—which a German might forgive; but Kant, said Heine, had killed God, had undermined the most precious arguments of theology. "What a sharp contrast between the outer life of this man, and his destructive, world-convulsing thoughts! Had the citizens of Königsberg surmised the whole significance of those thoughts, they would have felt a more profound awe in the presence of this man than in that of an executioner, who merely slays human beings. But the good people saw in him nothing but a professor of philosophy; and when at the fixed hour he sauntered by, they nodded a friendly greeting, and set their watches."[26]

Was this caricature, or revelation?

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[25] Wallace, p. 82.

[26] Heine. *Prose Miscellanies*. Philadelphia. 1876: p. 146.

IV. THE CRITIQUE OF PRACTICAL REASON

If religion cannot be based on science and theology, on what then? On morals. The basis in theology is too insecure; better that it should be abandoned, even destroyed; faith must be put beyond the reach or realm of reason. But therefore the moral basis of religion must be absolute, not derived from questionable sense-experience or precarious inference; not corrupted by the admixture of fallible reason; it must be derived from the inner self by direct perception and intuition. We must find a universal and necessary ethic; *a priori* principles of morals as absolute and certain as mathematics. We must show that "pure reason can be practical; i. e., can of itself determine the will independently of anything empirical,"[27] that the moral sense is innate, and not derived from experience. The moral imperative which we need as the basis of religion must be an absolute, a categorical, imperative.

Now the most astounding reality in all our experience is precisely our moral sense, our inescapable feeling, in the face of temptation, that this or that is wrong. We may yield; but

[27] *Critique of Practical Reason*, p. 31.

the feeling is there nevertheless. *Le matin je fais des projets, et le soir je fais des sottises;*[28] but we know that they are *sottises*, and we resolve again. What is it that brings the bite of remorse, and the new resolution? It is the categorical imperative in us, the unconditional command of our conscience, to "act as if the maxim of our action were to become by our will a universal law of nature."[29] We know, not by reasoning, but by vivid and immediate feeling, that we must avoid behavior which, if adopted by all men, would render social life impossible. Do I wish to escape from a predicament by a lie? But "while I can will the lie, I can by no means will that lying should be a universal law. For with such a law there would be no promises at all."[30] Hence the sense in me, that I must not lie, even if it be to my advantage. Prudence is hypothetical; its motto is, Honesty when it is the best policy; but the moral law in our hearts is unconditional and absolute.

And an action is good not because it has good results, or because it is wise, but because it is done in obedience to this inner sense of duty, this moral law that does not come from

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[28]"In the morning I make good resolutions; in the evening I commit follies."

[29]*Practical Reason*, p. 139. [30]*Ibid.*, p. 19.

our personal experience, but legislates imperiously and *a priori* for all our behavior, past, present, and future. The only thing unqualifiedly good in this world is a good will—the will to follow the moral law, regardless of profit or loss for ourselves. Never mind your happiness; do your duty. "Morality is not properly the doctrine how we may make ourselves happy, but how we may make ourselves worthy of happiness."[31] Let us seek the happiness of others; but for ourselves, perfection—whether it bring us happiness or pain.[32] To achieve perfection in yourself and happiness in others, "so act as to treat humanity, whether in thine own person or in that of another, in every case as an end, never only as a means":[33] —this too, as we directly feel, is part of the categorical imperative. Let us live up to such a principle, and we shall soon create an ideal community of rational beings; to create it we need only act as if we already belonged to it; we must apply the perfect law in the imperfect state. It is a hard ethic, you say,—this placing of duty above beauty, of morality above

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[31] *Ibid.*, p. 227.
[32] *Preface to the Metaphysical Elements of Ethics.*
[33] *Metaphysics of Morals*, London, 1909; p. 47.

happiness; but only so can we cease to be beasts, and begin to be gods.

Notice, meanwhile, that this absolute command to duty proves at last the freedom of our wills; how could we ever have conceived such a notion as duty if we had not felt ourselves free? We cannot prove this freedom by theoretical reason; we prove it by feeling it directly in the crisis of moral choice. We feel this freedom as the very essence of our inner selves, of the "pure Ego"; we feel within ourselves the spontaneous activity of a mind moulding experience and choosing goals. Our actions, once we initiate them, seem to follow fixed and invariable laws, but only because we perceive their results through sense, which clothes all that it transmits in the dress of that causal law which our minds themselves have made. Nevertheless, we are beyond and above the laws we make in order to understand the world of our experience; each of us is a center of initiative force and creative power. In a way which we feel but cannot prove, each of us is free.

And again, though we cannot prove, we feel, that we are deathless. We perceive that life is not like those dramas so beloved by the people—in which every villain is punished, and

every act of virtue meets with its reward; we learn anew every day that the wisdom of the serpent fares better here than the gentleness of the dove, and that any thief can triumph if he steals enough. If mere worldly utility and expediency were the justification of virtue, it would not be wise to be too good. And yet, knowing all this, having it flung into our faces with brutal repetition, we still feel the command to righteousness, *we know that we ought* to do the inexpedient good. How could this sense of right survive if it were not that in our hearts we feel this life to be only a part of life, this earthly dream only an embryonic prelude to a new birth, a new awakening; if we did not vaguely know that in that later and longer life the balance will be redressed, and not one cup of water given generously but shall be returned a hundred-fold?

Finally, and by the same token, there is a God. If the sense of duty involves and justifies belief in rewards to come, "the postulate of immortality...must lead to the supposition of the existence of a cause adequate to this effect; in other words, it must postulate the existence of God."[34] This again is no proof by "reason"; the moral sense, which has to

[34] *Practical Reason*, p. 220.

do with the world of our actions, must have priority over that theoretical logic which was developed only to deal with sense-phenomena. Our reason leaves us free to believe that behind the thing-in-itself there is a just God; our moral sense commands us to believe it. Rousseau was right: above the logic of the head is the feeling in the heart; the heart has reasons of its own, as Pascal said, which the head can never understand.

V. ON RELIGION AND REASON

Does this appear trite, and timid, and conservative? But it was not so; on the contrary, this bold denial of "rational" theology, this frank reduction of religion to moral faith and hope, aroused all the orthodox of Germany to protests. To face this "forty-parson-power" (as Byron would have called it) required more courage than one usually associates with the name of Kant.

That he was brave enough appeared in all clarity when he published, at sixty-six, his *Critique of Judgment*, and, at sixty-nine, his *Religion within the Limits of Pure Reason.* In the earlier of these books Kant returns to the discussion of that argument from design which, in the first *Critique*, he had rejected as an insufficient proof of the existence of God. He begins by correlating design and beauty; the beautiful, he thinks, is anything which reveals symmetry and unity of structure, as if it had been designed by intelligence. He observes in passing (and Schopenhauer here helped himself to a good deal of his theory of art) that the contemplation of symmetrical design always gives us a disinterested pleasure; and

that "an interest in the beauty of nature for its own sake is always a sign of goodness."[35] Many objects in nature show such beauty, such symmetry and unity as almost to drive us to the notion of supernatural design. But on the other hand, says Kant, there are also in nature many instances of waste and chaos, of useless repetition and multiplication; nature preserves life, but at the cost of how much suffering and death! The appearance of external design, then, is not a conclusive proof of Providence. The theologians who use the idea so much should abandon it, and the scientists who have abandoned it should use it; it is a magnificent clue, and leads to hundreds of revelations. For there is design, undoubtedly; but it is internal design, the design of the parts by the whole; and if science will interpret the parts of an organism in terms of their meaning for the whole, it will have an admirable balance for that other heuristic principle—the mechanical conception of life—which also is fruitful for discovery, but which, alone, can never explain the growth of even a blade of grass.

The essay on religion is a remarkable production for a man of sixty-nine; it is perhaps the boldest of all the books of Kant. Since

[35] *Critique of Judgment*, sect. 29.

religion must be based not on the logic of theoretical reason but on the practical reason of the moral sense, it follows that any Bible or revelation must be judged by its value for morality, and cannot itself be the judge of a moral code. Churches and dogmas have value only in so far as they assist the moral development of the race. When mere creeds or ceremonies usurp priority over moral excellence as a test of religion, religion has disappeared. The real church is a community of people, however scattered and divided, who are united by devotion to the common moral law. It was to establish such a community that Christ lived and died; it was this real church which he held up in contrast to the ecclesiasticism of the Pharisees. But another ecclesiasticism has almost overwhelmed this noble conception. "Christ has brought the kingdom of God nearer to earth; but he has been misunderstood; and in place of God's kingdom the kingdom of the priest has been established among us."[36] Creed and ritual have again replaced the good life; and instead of men being bound together by religion, they are divided into a thousand sects; and all manner of "pious

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[36]Quoted in Chamberlain, *Immanuel Kant;* vol. 1, p. 510.

nonsense" is inculcated as "a sort of heavenly court service by means of which one may win through flattery the favor of the ruler of heaven."[37]—Again, miracles cannot prove a religion, for we can never quite rely on the testimony which supports them; and prayer is useless if it aims at a suspension of the natural laws that hold for all experience. Finally, the nadir of perversion is reached when the church becomes an instrument in the hands of a reactionary government; when the clergy, whose function it is to console and guide a harassed humanity with religious faith and hope and charity, are made the tools of theological obscurantism and political oppression.

The audacity of these conclusions lay in the fact that precisely this had happened in Prussia. Frederick the Great had died in 1786, and had been succeeded by Frederick William II, to whom the liberal policies of his predecessor seemed to smack unpatriotically of the French Enlightenment. Zedlitz, who had been Minister of Education under Frederick, was dismissed; and his place was given to a Pietist, Wöllner, whom Frederick had denounced as "a treacherous and intriguing priest;" who divided his time between alchemy and Rosicrucian

[37] In Paulsen, 366.

mysteries, and climbed to power by offering himself as "an unworthy instrument" to the new monarch's policy of restoring the orthodox faith by compulsion.[38] Wöllner issued, in 1788, a decree which forbade any teaching, in school or university, that deviated from the orthodox form of Lutheran Protestantism; he established a strict censorship over all forms of publication, and ordered the discharge of every teacher suspected of any heresy. Kant was at first left unmolested, because he was an old man, and—as one royal adviser said—only a few people read him, and these did not understand him. But the essay on religion was too intelligible; and though it rang true with religious fervor, it revealed too strong a strain of Voltaire to pass the new censorship. The *Berliner Monatsschrift*, which had planned to publish the essay, was ordered to suppress it.

Kant acted now with a vigor and courage hardly credible in a man who had almost completed three score years and ten. He sent the essay to some friends at Jena, and through them had it published by the press of the university there. Jena was outside of Prussia, under the jurisdiction of that same liberal

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[38] *Encyclopedia Brittanica*, article "Frederick William II."

Duke of Weimar who was then caring for Goethe. The result was that in 1794 Kant received an eloquent cabinet order from the Prussian King, which read as follows: "Our highest person has been greatly displeased to observe how you misuse your philosophy to undermine and destroy many of the most important and fundamental doctrines of the Holy Scriptures and of Christianity. We demand of you immediately an exact account, and expect that in future you will give no such cause of offense, but rather that, in accordance with your duty, you will employ your talents and authority so that our paternal purpose may be more and more attained. If you continue to oppose this order you may expect unpleasant consequences."[39] Kant replied that every scholar should have the right to form independent judgments on religious matters, and to make his opinions known; but that during the reign of the present king he would preserve silence. Some biographers who can be very brave by proxy, have condemned him for this concession; but let us remember that Kant was seventy, that he was frail in health, and not fit for a fight; and that he had already spoken his message to the world.

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[39]In Paulsen, p. 49.

VI. ON POLITICS AND ETERNAL PEACE

The Prussian government might have pardoned Kant's theology, had he not been guilty of political heresies as well. Three years after the accession of Frederick William II, the French Revolution had set all the thrones of Europe trembling. At a time when most of the teachers in the Prussian universities had rushed to the support of legitimate monarchy, Kant, sixty-five years young, hailed the Revolution with joy; and with tears in his eyes said to his friends: "Now I can say like Simeon, 'Lord, let now Thy servant depart in peace; for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation.' "[40]

He had published, in 1784, a brief exposition of his political theory under the title of "The Natural Principle of the Political Order considered in connection with the Idea of a Universal Cosmopolitical History"; the title itself was a considerable portion of the essay. Kant begins by recognizing, in that strife of each against all which had so shocked Hobbes, nature's method of developing the hidden capacities of life; struggle is the indispensable accompaniment of progress. If men were en-

[40]Wallace, p. 40.

tirely social, man would stagnate; a certain alloy of individualism and competition is required to make the human species survive and grow. "Without qualities of an unsocial kind ...men might have led an Arcadian shepherd life in complete harmony, contentment, and mutual love; but in that case all their talents would have forever remained hidden in their germ." (Kant, therefore, was no slavish follower of Rousseau.) "Thanks be then to nature for this unsociableness, for this envious jealousy and vanity, for this insatiable desire for possession and for power...Man wishes concord; but nature knows better what is good for his species; and she wills discord, in order that man may be impelled to a new exertion of his powers, and to the further development of his natural capacities."

The struggle for existence, then, is not altogether an evil. Nevertheless, men soon perceive that it must be restricted within certain limits, and regulated by rules, customs, and laws; hence the origin and development of civil society. But now "the same unsociableness which forced men into society becomes again the cause of each commonwealth's assuming the attitude of uncontrolled freedom in its external relations,— i. e., as one state in

relation to other states; and consequently, any one state must expect from any other the same sort of evils as formerly oppressed individuals and compelled them to enter into a civil union regulated by law."[41] It is time that nations, like men, should emerge from the wild state of nature, and contract to keep the peace. The whole meaning and movement of history is the ever greater restriction of pugnacity and violence, the continuous enlargement of the area of peace. "The history of the human race, viewed as a whole, may be regarded as the realization of a hidden plan of nature to bring about a political constitution, internally and externally perfect, as the only state in which all the capacities implanted by her in mankind can be fully developed."[42] If there is no such progress, the labors of successive civilizations are like those of Sisyphus, who again and again "up the high hill heaved a huge round stone," only to have it roll back as it was almost at the top. History would be then nothing more than an endless and circuitous folly; "and we might suppose, like the Hindu, that the earth is a place for the expiation of old and forgotten sins."[43]

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[41] *Eternal Peace and Other Essays;* Boston, 1914; p. 14.

[42] *Ibid.,* p. 19. [43] P. 58

The essay on "Eternal Peace" (published in 1795, when Kant was seventy-one) is a noble development of this theme. Kant knows how easy it is to laugh at the phrase; and under his title he writes: "These words were once put by a Dutch inn-keeper on his sign-board as a satirical inscription, over the representation of a church-yard" cemetery.[44] Kant had before complained, as apparently every generation must, that "our rulers have no money to spend on public education...because all their resources are already placed to the account of the next war."[45] The nations will not really be civilized until all standing armies are abolished.—The audacity of this proposal stands out when we remember that it was Prussia itself which, under the father of Frederick the Great, had been the first to establish conscription.—"Standing armies excite states to outrival one another in the number of their armed men, which has no limit. Through the expense occasioned thereby, peace becomes in the long run more oppressive than a short war; and standing armies are thus the cause of aggressive wars undertaken in order to get rid of this burden."[46] For in time of war the army would support

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[44]P. 68. [45]P. 21. [46]P. 71.

itself on the country, by requisitioning, quartering, and pillaging; preferably in the enemy's territory, but if necessary, in one's own land; even this would be better than supporting it out of government funds.

Much of this militarism, in Kant's judgment, was due to the expansion of Europe into America and Africa and Asia; with the resultant quarrels of the thieves over their new booty. "If we compare the barbarian instances of inhospitality...with the inhuman behavior of the civilized, and especially the commercial, states of our continent, the injustice practiced by them even in their first contact with foreign lands and peoples fills us with horror; the mere visiting of such peoples being regarded by them as equivalent to a conquest. America, the negro lands, the Spice Islands, the Cape of Good Hope, etc., on being discovered, were treated as countries that belonged to nobody; for the aboriginal inhabitants were reckoned as nothing....And all this has been done by nations who make a great ado about their piety, and who, while drinking up iniquity like water, would have themselves regarded as the very elect of the orthodox faith."[47]—The old fox of Königsberg was not

[47] P. 68.

silenced yet!

Kant attributed this imperialistic greed to the oligarchical constitution of European states; the spoils went to a select few, and remained substantial even after division. If democracy were established, and all shared in political power, the spoils of international robbery would have to be so subdivided as to constitute a resistible temptation. Hence the "first definitive article in the conditions of Eternal Peace" is this: "The civil constitution of every state shall be republican, and war shall not be declared except by a plebiscite of all the citizens."[48] When those who must do the fighting have the right to decide between war and peace, history will no longer be written in blood. "On the other hand, in a constitution where the subject is not a voting member of the state, and which is therefore not republican, the resolution to go to war is a matter of the smallest concern in the world. For in this case the ruler, who, as such, is not a mere citizen, but the owner of the state, need not in the least suffer personally by war, nor has he to sacrifice his pleasures of the table or the chase, or his pleasant palaces, court festivals, or the like.

[48]Pp. 76-77.

He can, therefore, resolve for war from insignificant reasons, as if it were but a hunting expedition; and as regards its propriety, he may leave the justification of it without concern to the diplomatic corps, who are always too ready to give their services for that purpose."[49] How contemporary truth is!

The apparent victory of the Revolution over the armies of reaction in 1795 led Kant to hope that republics would now spring up throughout Europe, and that an international order would arise based upon a democracy without slavery and without exploitation, and pledged to peace. After all, the function of government is to help and develop the individual, not to use and abuse him. "Every man is to be respected as an absolute end in himself; and it is a crime against the dignity that belongs to him as a human being, to use him as a mere means for some external purpose."[50] This too is part and parcel of that categorical imperative without which religion is a hypocritical farce. Kant therefore calls for equality: not of ability, but of opportunity for the development and application of ability; he rejects all prerogatives of birth and class, and

[49] *Ibid.*
[50] In Paulsen, p. 340.

traces all hereditary privilege to some violent conquest in the past. In the midst of obscurantism and reaction and the union of all monarchical Europe to crush the Revolution, he takes his stand, despite his seventy years, for the new order, for the establishment of democracy and liberty everywhere. Never had old age so bravely spoken with the voice of youth.

But he was exhausted now; he had run his race and fought his fight. He withered slowly into a childlike senility that came at last to be a harmless insanity: one by one his sensibilities and his powers left him; and in 1804, aged seventy-nine, he died, quietly and naturally, like a leaf falling from a tree.

VII. CRITICISM AND ESTIMATE

And now how does this complex structure of logic, metaphysics, psychology, ethics, and politics stand today, after the philosophic storms of a century have beaten down upon it? It is pleasant to answer that much of the great edifice remains; and that the "critical philosophy" represents an event of permanent importance in the history of thought. But many details and outworks of the structure have been shaken.

First, then, is space a mere "form of sensibility," having no objective reality independent of the perceiving mind? Yes and no. Yes: for space is an empty concept when not filled with perceived objects; "space" merely means that certain objects are, for the perceiving mind, at such and such a position, or distance, with reference to other perceived objects; and no external perception is possible except of objects in space; space then is assuredly a "necessary form of the external sense." And no: for without doubt, such spatial facts as the annual elliptic circuit of sun by earth, though statable only by a mind, are independent of any perception whatever; the deep and dark blue ocean rolled on before Byron told it to,

and after he had ceased to be. Nor is space a "construct" of the mind through the co-ordination of spaceless sensations; we perceive space directly through our simultaneous perception of different objects and various points—as when we see an insect moving across a still background. Likewise: time as a sense of before and after, or a measurement of motion, is of course subjective, and highly relative; but a tree will age, wither and decay whether or not the lapse of time is measured or perceived. The truth is that Kant was too anxious to prove the subjectivity of space, as a refuge from materialism; he feared the argument that if space is objective and universal, God must exist in space, and be therefore spatial and material. He might have been content with the critical idealism which shows that all reality is known to us primarily as our sensations and ideas. The old fox bit off more than he could chew.[51]

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[51]The persistent vitality of Kant's theory of knowledge appears in its complete acceptance by so matter-of-fact a scientist as the late Charles P. Steinmetz: "All our sense-perceptions are limited by, and attached to, the conceptions of time and space. Kant, the greatest and most critical of all philosophers, denies that time and space are the product of experience, but shows them to be categories—conceptions in which our minds clothe the sense perceptions." (The honorable scientist is slightly confused here.) "Modern physics has

He might well have contented himself, too, with the relativity of scientific truth, without straining towards that mirage, the absolute. Recent studies like those of Pearson in England, Mach in Germany, and Henri Poincaré in France, agree rather with Hume than with Kant: all science, even the most rigorous mathematics, is relative in its truth. Science itself is not worried about the matter; a high degree of probability contents it. Perhaps, after all, "necessary" knowledge is not necessary.

The great achievement of Kant is to have shown, once for all, that the external world is known to us only as sensation; and that the mind is no mere helpless *tabula rasa*, the inactive victim of sensation, but a positive agent, selecting and reconstructing experience as experience arrives. We can make subtractions from this accomplishment without injuring its essential greatness. We may smile, with Schopenhauer, at the exact baker's dozen of categories, so prettily boxed into triplets, and then stretched and contracted and interpreted de-

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come to the same conclusion in the relativity theory, that absolute space and absolute time have no existence, but time and space exist only as far as things or events fill them; that is, they are forms of perception."--Address at the Unitarian Church, Schenectady, 1923.

viously and ruthlessly to fit and surround all things.[52] And we may even question whether these categories, or interpretive forms of thought, are innate, existing before sensation and experience; perhaps so in the individual, as Spencer conceded, though acquired by the race; and then, again, probably acquired even by the individual: the categories may be grooves of thought, habits of perception and conception, gradually produced by sensations and perceptions automatically arranging themselves,—first in disorderly ways, then, by a kind of natural selection of forms of arrangement, in orderly and adaptive and illuminating ways. It is memory that classifies and interprets sensations into perceptions, and perceptions into ideas; but memory is an accretion. That unity of the mind which Kant thinks native (the "transcendental unity of apperception") is acquired—and not by all; and can be lost as well as won,—as in amnesia, or alternating personality, or insanity. Concepts are an achievement, not a gift.

The nineteenth century dealt rather hardly with Kant's ethics, his theory of an innate, *a priori*, absolute moral sense. The philosophy of evolution suggested irresistibly that the

[52] *Op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 23.

sense of duty is a social deposit in the individual; the content of conscience is acquired, though the vague disposition to social behavior is innate. The moral self, the social man, is no "special creation" coming mysteriously from the hand of God, but the late product of a leisurely evolution. Morals are not absolute; they are a code of conduct more or less haphazardly developed for group survival, and varying with the nature and circumstances of the group: a people hemmed in by enemies, for example, will consider as immoral that zestful and restless individualism which a nation youthful and secure in its wealth and isolation will condone as a necessary ingredient in the exploitation of natural resources and the formation of national character. No action is good in itself, as Kant supposes.[53] His pietistic youth, and his hard life of endless duty and infrequent pleasure, gave him a moralistic bent; he came at last to advocate duty for duty's sake, and so fell unwittingly into the arms of Prussian absolutism.[54] There is something of a severe Scotch Calvinism in this opposition of duty to happiness; Kant continues Luther and the Stoic Reformation, as Voltaire

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[53] *Practical Reason*, p. 31.

[54] Cf. Prof. Dewey: *German Philosophy and Politics.*

continues Montaigne and the Epicurean Renaissance. He represented a stern reaction against the egoism and hedonism in which Helvetius and Holbach had formulated the life of their reckless era, very much as Luther had reacted against the luxury and laxity of Mediterranean Italy. But after a century of reaction against the absolutism of Kant's ethics, we find ourselves again in a welter of urban sensualism and immorality, of ruthless individualism untempered with social conscience or aristocratic honor; and perhaps the day will soon come when a disintegrating civilization will welcome again the Kantian call to duty.

The marvel in Kant's philosophy is his vigorous revival, in the second *Critique*, of those religious ideas of God, freedom, and immortality, which the first *Critique* had apparently destroyed. "In Kant's works," says Nietzsche's critical friend, Paul Ree, "you feel as though you were at a country fair. You can buy from him anything you want—freedom of the will and captivity of the will, idealism and a refutation of idealism, atheism and the good Lord. Like a juggler out of an empty hat, Kant draws out of the concept of duty a God, immortality, and freedom,—to the great sur-

prise of his readers."[55] Schopenhauer too takes a fling at the derivation of immortality from the need of reward: Kant's virtue, which at first bore itself so bravely towards happiness, loses its independence later, and holds out its hand for a tip."[56] The great pessimist believes that Kant was really a sceptic who, having abandoned belief himself, hesitated to destroy the faith of the people, for fear of the consequences to public morals. "Kant discloses the groundlessness of speculative theology, and leaves popular theology untouched, nay even establishes it in a nobler form as a faith based upon moral feeling. This was afterwards distorted by the philosophasters into rational apprehension and consciousness of God, etc.....; while Kant, as he demolished old and revered errors, and knew the danger of doing so, rather wished through the moral theology merely to substitute a few weak temporary supports, so that the ruin might not fall upon him, but that he might have time to escape."[57] So too Heine, in what is no doubt an intentional caricature, represents Kant, after having destroyed religion, going out for a walk

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[55]In Untermann, *Science and Revolution*, Chicago, 1905; p. 81.

[56]In Paulsen, p. 317.

[57]*The World as Will and Idea*, vol. ii, p. 129.

with his servant Lampe, and suddenly perceiving that the old man's eyes are filled with tears. "Then Immanuel Kant has compassion and shows that he is not only a great philosopher, but also a good man; and half kindly, half ironically, he speaks: 'Old Lampe must have a God or else he cannot be happy, says the practical reason; for my part, the practical reason may, then, guarantee the existence of God.' "[58] If these interpretations were true we should have to adapt the title of a section of the first *Critique* and call the entire second *Critique* a Transcendental Anesthetic. And no doubt Kant made a mistake when he sought to secure religion from attack by proposing, as he puts it, "to make faith independent of knowledge."[59] What a comfort for old maids forever!—and no aid at all to any masculine belief.

But these adventurous reconstructions of the inner Kant need not be taken too seriously The fervor of the essay on "Religion within the Limits of Pure Reason" indicates a sincerity too intense to be questioned, and the attempt to change the base of religion from theology to morals, from creeds to conduct,

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[58] Quoted by Paulsen, p. 8.
[59] *Ibid.*, p. 7.

could have come only from a profoundly religious mind. "It is indeed true," he wrote to Moses Mendelssohn in 1766, "that I think many things with the clearest conviction,... which I never have the courage to say; but I will never say anything which I do not think."[60] Naturally, a long and obscure treatise like the great *Critique* lends itself to rival interpretations; one of the first reviews of the book (written by Reinhold a few years after the *Critique* appeared) said as much as we can say today: "The *Critique of Pure Reason* has been proclaimed by the dogmatists as the attempt of a sceptic who undermines the certainty of all knowledge;—by the sceptics as a piece of arrogant presumption that undertakes to erect a new form of dogmatism upon the ruins of previous systems;—by the supernaturalists as a subtly plotted artifice to displace the historical foundations of religion, and to establish naturalism without polemic;—by the naturalists as a new prop for the dying philosophy of faith;—by the materialists as an idealistic contradiction of the reality of matter;—by the spiritualists as an unjustifiable limitation of all reality to the corporeal world, concealed

[60]In Paulsen, p. 53.

under the name of the domain of experience."[61] And in truth the glory of the book lay in its appreciation of all these points of view; and to an intelligence as keen as Kant's own, it might well appear that he had really reconciled them all, and fused them into such a unity of complex truth as philosophy had not seen in all its history before.

As to his influence, all the philosophic thought of the nineteenth century revolved about his speculations. After Kant, all Germany began to talk metaphysics: Schiller and Goethe studied him; Beethoven quoted with admiration his famous words about the two wonders of life—"the starry heavens above, the moral law within"; and Fichte, Schelling, Hegel and Schopenhauer produced in rapid succession great systems of thought reared upon the idealism of the old Königsberg sage. It was in these balmy days of German metaphysics that Jean Paul Richter wrote: "God has given to the French the land, to the English the sea, to the Germans the empire of the air." Kant's criticism of reason, and his exaltation of feeling, prepared for the voluntarism of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, the intuitionism of Bergson, and the pragmatism of William

[61] *Ibid.*, p. 114.

James; his identification of the laws of thought with the laws of reality gave to Hegel a whole system of philosophy; and his unknowable "thing-in-itself" influenced Spencer more than Spencer knew. Much of the obscurity of Carlyle is traceable to his attempt to allegorize the already obscure thought of Goethe and Kant—that diverse religions and philosophies are but the changing garments of one eternal truth. Caird and Green and Wallace and Watson and Bradley and many others in England owe their inspiration to the first *Critique;* and even the wildly innovating Nietzsche takes his epistemology from the "great Chinaman of Königsberg" whose static ethics he so excitedly condemns. After a century of struggle between the idealism of Kant, variously reformed, and the materialism of the Enlightenment, variously redressed, the victory seems to lie with Kant. Even the great materialist Helvetius wrote, paradoxically: "Men, if I may dare say it, are the creators of matter."[62] Philosophy will never again be so naïve as in her earlier and simpler days; she must always be different, hereafter, and profounder, because Kant lived.

[62] In Chamberlain, vol. i, p. 86.

VIII. A NOTE ON HEGEL

Not very long ago it was the custom for historians of philosophy to give to the immediate successors of Kant—to Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel—as much honor and space as to all his predecessors in modern thought from Bacon and Descartes to Voltaire and Hume. Our perspective today is a little different, and we enjoy perhaps too keenly the invective leveled by Schopenhauer at his successful rivals in the competition for professorial posts. By reading Kant, said Schopenhauer, "the public was compelled to see that what is obscure is not always without significance." Fichte and Schelling took advantage of this, and excogitated magnificent spider-webs of metaphysics. "But the height of audacity in serving up pure nonsense, in stringing together senseless and extravagant mazes of words, such as had previously been known only in madhouses, was finally reached in Hegel, and became the instrument of the most bare-faced general mystification that has ever taken place, with a result which will appear fabulous to posterity, and

will remain as a monument to German stupidity."(63) Is this fair?

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel was born at Stuttgart in 1770. His father was a subordinate official in the department of finances of the state of Würtemberg; and Hegel himself grew up with the patient and methodical habits of those civil servants whose modest efficiency has given Germany the best-governed cities in the world. The youth was a tireless student: he made full analyses of all the important books he read, and copied out long passages. True culture, he said, must begin with resolute self-effacement; as in the Pythagorean system of education, where the pupil, for the first five years, was required to keep his peace.

His studies of Greek literature gave him an enthusiasm for Attic culture which remained with him when almost all other enthusiasms had died away. "At the name of Greece," he wrote, "the cultivated German finds himself at home. Europeans have their religion from a further source, from the East; . . . but what is here, what is present,—science and art, all that makes life satisfying, and elevates and

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(63) Caird, *Hegel*, in the Blackwood Philosophical Classics; pp. 5-8. The biographical account follows Caird throughout.

adorns it—we derive, directly or indirectly, from Greece." For a time he preferred the religion of the Greeks to Christianity; and he anticipated Strauss and Renan by writing a *Life of Jesus* in which Jesus was taken as the son of Mary and Joseph, and the miraculous element was ignored. Later he destroyed the book.

In politics too he showed a spirit of rebellion hardly to be suspected from his later sanctification of the *status quo*. While studying for the ministry at Tübingen, he and Schelling hotly defended the French Revolution, and went out early one morning to plant a Liberty Tree in the market-place. "The French nation, by the bath of its revolution," he wrote, "has been freed from many institutions which the spirit of man has left behind like its baby shoes, and which therefore weighed upon it, as they still weigh upon others, like lifeless feathers." It was in those hopeful days, "when to be young was very heaven," that he flirted, like Fichte, with a kind of aristocratic socialism, and gave himself, with characteristic vigor, to the Romantic current in which all Europe was engulfed.

He was graduated from Tübingen in 1793

with a certificate stating that he was a man of good parts and character, well up in theology and philology, but with no ability in philosophy. He was poor now, and had to earn his bread by tutoring in Berne and Frankfort. These were his chrysalis years: while Europe tore itself into nationalist pieces, Hegel gathered himself together and grew. Then (1799) his father died, and Hegel, falling heir to some $1,500, considered himself a rich man, and gave up tutoring. He wrote to his friend Schelling for advice as to where to settle, and asked for a place where there would be simple food, abundant books, and "ein gutes Bier." Schelling recommended Jena, which was a university town under the jurisdiction of that same Duke of Weimar who was the friend and patron of Goethe. At Jena Schiller was teaching history; Tieck, Novalis and the Schlegels were preaching romanticism; and Fichte and Schelling were propounding their philosophies. There Hegel came in 1801, and in 1803 became a teacher at the University.

He was still there in 1806 when Napoleon's victory over the Prussians threw the scholarly little city into confusion and terror. French soldiers invaded Hegel's home, and he took to

his heels like a philosopher, carrying with him the manuscript of his first important book, *The Phenomenology of Spirit.* For a while he was so destitute that Goethe told Knebel to lend him a few dollars to tide him over. Hegel wrote almost bitterly to Knebel: "I have made my guiding-star the Biblical saying, the truth of which I have learned by experience, Seek ye first food and clothing, and the kingdom of heaven shall be added unto you." For a while he edited a paper at Bamberg; then, in 1812, he became head of the gymnasium at Nürnburg. It was there, perhaps, that the stoic necessities of administrative work cooled the fires of romanticism in him, and made him, like Napoleon and Goethe, a classic vestige in a romantic age. And it was there that he wrote his *Logic* (1812-16), which captivated Germany by its unintelligibility, and won him the chair of philosophy at Heidelberg. At Heidelberg he wrote his immense *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences* (1817), on the strength of which he was promoted, in 1818, to the University of Berlin. From that time to the end of his life he ruled the philosophic world as indisputably as Goethe the world of literature, and Beethoven the realm of music. His birthday came on the day after

Goethe's; and proud Germany made a double holiday for them every year.

A Frenchman once asked Hegel to put his philosophy into one sentence; and he did not succeed so well as the monk who, asked to define Christianity while standing on one foot, said, simply, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Hegel preferred to answer in ten volumes; and when they were written and published, and all the world was talking about them, he complained that "only one man understands me, and even he does not."[64] Most of his writings, like Aristotle's, consist of his lecture-notes; or, worse, of the notes taken by students who heard his lectures. Only the *Logic* and the *Phenomenology* are from his hand, and these are masterpieces of obscurity, darkened by abstractness and condensation of style, by a weirdly original terminology, and by an over-careful modification of every statement with a Gothic wealth of limiting clauses. Hegel described his work as "an attempt to teach philosophy to speak in German."[65] He succeeded.

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[64]Ruthless critics, as we might have expected, challenge the authenticity of this story.

[65]Wallace: *Prolegomena to the Logic of Hegel*, p. 10.

The *Logic* is an analysis not of methods of reasoning, but of the concepts used in reasoning. These Hegel takes to be the categories named by Kant—Being, Quality, Quantity, Relation, etc. It is the first business of philosophy to dissect these basic notions that are so bandied about in all our thinking. The most pervasive of them all is Relation; every idea is a group of relations; we can think of something only by relating it to something else, and perceiving its similarities and its differences. An idea without relations of any kind is empty; this is all that is meant by saying that "Pure Being and Nothing are the same": Being absolutely devoid of relations or qualities does not exist, and has no meaning whatever. This proposition led to an endless chain of witticisms which still breed; and it proved to be at once an obstacle and a lure to the study of Hegel's thought.

Of all relations, the most universal is that of contrast or opposition. Every condition of thought or of things—every idea and every situation in the world—leads irresistibly to its opposite, and then unites with it to form a higher or more complex whole. This "dialectical movement" runs through everything

that Hegel wrote. It is an old thought, of course, foreshadowed by Empedocles, and embodied in the "golden mean" of Aristotle, who wrote that "the knowledge of opposites is one." The truth (like an electron) is an organic unity of opposed parts. The truth of conservatism and radicalism is liberalism—an open mind and a cautious hand; the formation of our opinions on large issues is a decreasing oscillation between extremes; and in all debatable questions *veritas in medio stat.* The movement of evolution is a continuous development of oppositions, and their merging and reconciliation. Schelling was right—there is an underlying "identity of opposites"; and Fichte was right—thesis, antithesis and synthesis constitute the formula and secret of all development and all reality.

For not only do thoughts develop and evolve according to this "dialectical movement," but things do equally; every condition of affairs contains a contradiction which evolution must resolve by a reconciling unity. So, no doubt, our present social system secretes a self-corroding contradiction: the stimulating individualism required in a period of economic adolescence and unexploited resources, arouses;

in a later age, the aspiration for a co-operative commonwealth; and the future will see neither the present reality nor the visioned ideal, but a synthesis in which something of both will come together to beget a higher life. And that higher stage too will divide into a productive contradiction, and rise to still loftier levels of organization, complexity, and unity. The movement of thought, then, is the same as the movement of things; in each there is a dialectical progression from unity through diversity to diversity-in-unity. Thought and being follow the same law; and logic and metaphysics are one.

Mind is the indispensable organ for the perception of this dialectical process, and this unity in difference. The function of the mind, and the task of philosophy, is to discover the unity that lies potential in diversity; the task of ethics is to unify character and conduct; and the task of politics is to unify individuals into a state. The task of religion is to reach and feel that Absolute in which all opposites are resolved into unity, that great sum of being in which matter and mind, subject and object, good and evil, are one. God is the system of relationships in which all things move and

have their being and their significance. In man the Absolute rises to self-consciousness, and becomes the Absolute Idea—that is, thought realizing itself as part of the Absolute, and therefore transcending individual limitations and purposes, and catching, underneath the universal strife, the hidden harmony of all things. "Reason is the substance of the universe; . . . the design of the world is absolutely rational."[66]

Not that strife and evil are mere negative imaginings; they are real enough; but they are, in wisdom's perspective, stages to fulfilment and the good. Struggle is the law of growth; character is built in the storm and stress of the world; and a man reaches his full height only through compulsions, responsibilities, and suffering. Even pain has its rationale; it is a sign of life and a stimulus to reconstruction. Passion also has a place in the reason of things: "nothing great in the world has been accomplished without passion";[67] and even the egoistic ambitions of a Napoleon contribute unwittingly to the development of nations. Life is not made for happi-

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[66]Hegel: *Philosophy of History*, Bohn ed., pp. 9, 13.

[67]*Ibid.*, p. 26.

ness, but for achievement. "The history of the world is not the theatre of happiness; periods of happiness are blank pages in it, for they are periods of harmony";(68) and this dull content is unworthy of a man. History is made only in those periods in which the contradictions of reality are being resolved by growth, as the hesitations and awkwardness of youth pass into the ease and order of maturity. History is a dialectical movement, almost a series of revolutions, in which people after people, and genius after genius, becomes the instrument of the Absolute. Great men are not so much begetters, as midwives, of the future; what they bring forth is mothered by the *Zeitgeist*, the Spirit of the Age. The genius merely places another stone on the pile, as others have done; "somehow his has the good fortune to come last, and when he places his stone the arch stands self-supported." "Such individuals had no consciousness of the general Idea they were unfolding; . . . but they had an insight into the requirements of the time—what was ripe for development. This was the very Truth for their age, for their world; the species next in

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[68] *Ibid.*, p. 28.

order, so to speak, and which was already formed in the womb of time."(69)

Such a philosophy of history seems to lead to revolutionary conclusions. The dialectical process makes change the cardinal principle of life; no condition is permanent; in every stage of things there is a contradiction which only the "strife of opposites" can resolve. The deepest law of politics, therefore, is freedom—an open avenue to change; history is the growth of freedom, and the state is, or should be, freedom organized. On the other hand, the doctrine that "the real is rational" has a conservative color: every condition, though destined to disappear, has the divine right that belongs to it as a necessary stage in evolution; in a sense it is brutally true that "whatever is, is right." And as unity is the goal of development, order is the first requisite of liberty.

If Hegel inclined, in his later years, to the conservative rather than to the radical implications of his philosophy, it was partly because the Spirit of the Time (to use his own historic phrase) was weary of too much change.

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(69) *Ibid.*, p. 31.

After the Revolution of 1830 he wrote: "Finally, after forty years of war and immeasurable confusion, an old heart might rejoice to see an end of it all, and the beginning of a period of peaceful satisfaction."(70) It was not quite in order that the philosopher of strife as the dialectic of growth should become the advocate of content; but at sixty a man has a right to ask for peace. Nevertheless, the contradictions in Hegel's thought were too deep for peace; and in the next generation his followers split with dialectical fatality into the "Hegelian Right" and the "Hegelian Left." Weisse and the younger Fichte found, in the theory of the real as rational, a philosophical expression of the doctrine of Providence, and justification for a politics of absolute obedience. Feuerbach, Moleschott, Bauer and Marx returned to the scepticism and "higher criticism" of Hegel's youth, and developed the philosophy of history into a theory of class struggles leading by a sort of Hegelian necessity, to "socialism inevitable." In place of the Absolute as determining history through the *Zeitgeist*, Marx offered mass movements and

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(70) Cited p. 92.

economic forces as the basic causes of every fundamental change, whether in the world of things or in the life of thought. Hegel, the imperial professor, had hatched the socialistic eggs.

The old philosopher denounced the radicals as dreamers, and carefully hid away his early essays. He allied himself with the Prussian Government, blessed it as the latest expression of the Absolute, and basked in the sun of its academic favors. His enemies called him "the official philosopher." He began to think of the Hegelian system as part of the natural laws of the world; he forgot that his own dialectic condemned his thought to impermanence and decay. "Never did a philosophy assume such a lofty tone, and never were its royal honors so fully recognized and secured, as in 1830" in Berlin.(71)

But Hegel aged rapidly in those happy years. He became as absent-minded as a story-book genius; once he entered the lecture-room with only one shoe, having left the other, unnoticed, in the mud. When the cholera epidemic came to Berlin in 1831, his weakened body was one of the first to succumb to the contagion. After

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71 Paulsen, *Immanuel Kant*, p. 385.

only a day's illness he passed away suddenly and quietly in his sleep. Just as the space of a year had seen the birth of Napoleon, Beethoven and Hegel, so in the years from 1827 to 1832 Germany lost Goethe, Hegel, and Beethoven. It was the end of an epoch, the last fine effort of Germany's greatest age.

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(See "Literature (Ancient)" for Greek and Roman Drama. See "Shakespeare" for Shakespearean Plays and Criticism. See "Oscar Wilde." See "French Literature" for Moliere, Victor Hugo and Maeterlinck. See "Ibsen, Henrik.")
90 The Mikado. Gilbert.
226 The Anti-Semites. Schnitzler.
308 She Stoops to Conquer. Goldsmith.
335 The Land of Heart's Desire. Yeats
337 Pippa Passes. Browning.